AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-10 and 12-14 are pending. Please amend claims 1, 5 and 12. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) An image sensing apparatus comprising:

an image sensing device which generates an image sensing signal by photoelectrically converting light from an object;

a weighting device which weights a signal component corresponding to inside of a focus detection area sensed by said image sensing device; and

an evaluation value acquiring device which acquires a piece or pieces of information required to control a focusing lens only from an output from said weighting device,

wherein said weighting device changes a level of weighting in a second area which is inside of the focus detection area and outside of a first area which is placed substantially at a center of inside of the focus detection area, [[and]]

wherein the level of weighting in the second area is changed so as to gradually approach to a weighting level of the first area through plural steps, and

wherein the focus detection area is one part of an image sensing area sensed by said image sensing device.

2. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said weighting device changes the level of weighting so that the level of weighting increases from a peripheral portion to a central portion of the focus detection area.

3. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said weighting device independently sets the level of weighting in horizontal and vertical directions of the frame.

4. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the focus detection area comprises a plurality of focus detection areas, and said weighting device performs relative weighting between the adjacent focus detection areas.

5. (currently amended) An autofocus method comprising:

an image sensing step of generating an image sensing signal by photoelectrically converting light from an object;

a weighting step of weighting a signal component corresponding to inside of a focus detection area in a frame sensed in the image sensing step; and

an evaluation value acquiring step of acquiring a piece or pieces of information required to control a focusing lens only from an output in the weighting step,

wherein in the weighting step, a level of weighting is changed in a second area which is inside of a focus detection area and outside of a first area which is placed substantially at a center of inside of the focus detection area.

6. (previously presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein in the weighting step, the level of weighting is changed so that the level of weighting increases from a peripheral portion to a central portion of the focus detection area.

7. (previously presented) The method according to claim 6, wherein in the weighting step, the level of weighting is independently set in horizontal and vertical directions of the frame.

8. (previously presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein the focus detection area comprises a plurality of focus detection areas, and in the weighting step, relative weighting is performed between the adjacent focus detection areas.

9. (previously presented) A program characterized by causing a computer to execute an autofocus method defined in claim 5.

10. (previously presented) A storage medium characterized by computer-readably storing a program defined in claim 9.

11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) An image sensing apparatus comprising:

an image sensing device which generates an image sensing signal by photoelectrically converting light from an object;

a weighting device which weights a signal component corresponding to inside of a focus detection area sensed by said image sensing device, and

an evaluation value acquiring device which acquires a piece or pieces of information required to control a focusing lens from an output from said weighting device[[; and]],

wherein ~~said weighting device performs relative weighting processing between adjacent plural focus detection areas~~ in the case that a plurality of focus detection areas exist, a weighting value weighted by said weighting device is different from the case that only one focus detection area exists.

13. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a driving device which drives a focusing lens to an in-focus point on the basis of a signal acquired by said evaluation value acquiring device.

14. (previously presented) The method according to claim 5, further comprising a driving stop of driving a focusing lens to an in-focus point on the basis of a signal acquired in the evaluation value acquiring stop.